

# Ethnohistoric and Archaeological Evidence on the Locations of the Natchez Villages

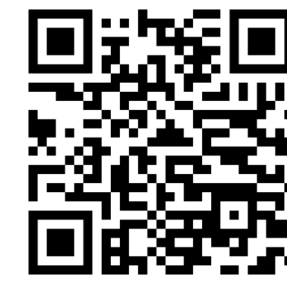
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## The 1720s Natchez Villages, 1985-2018

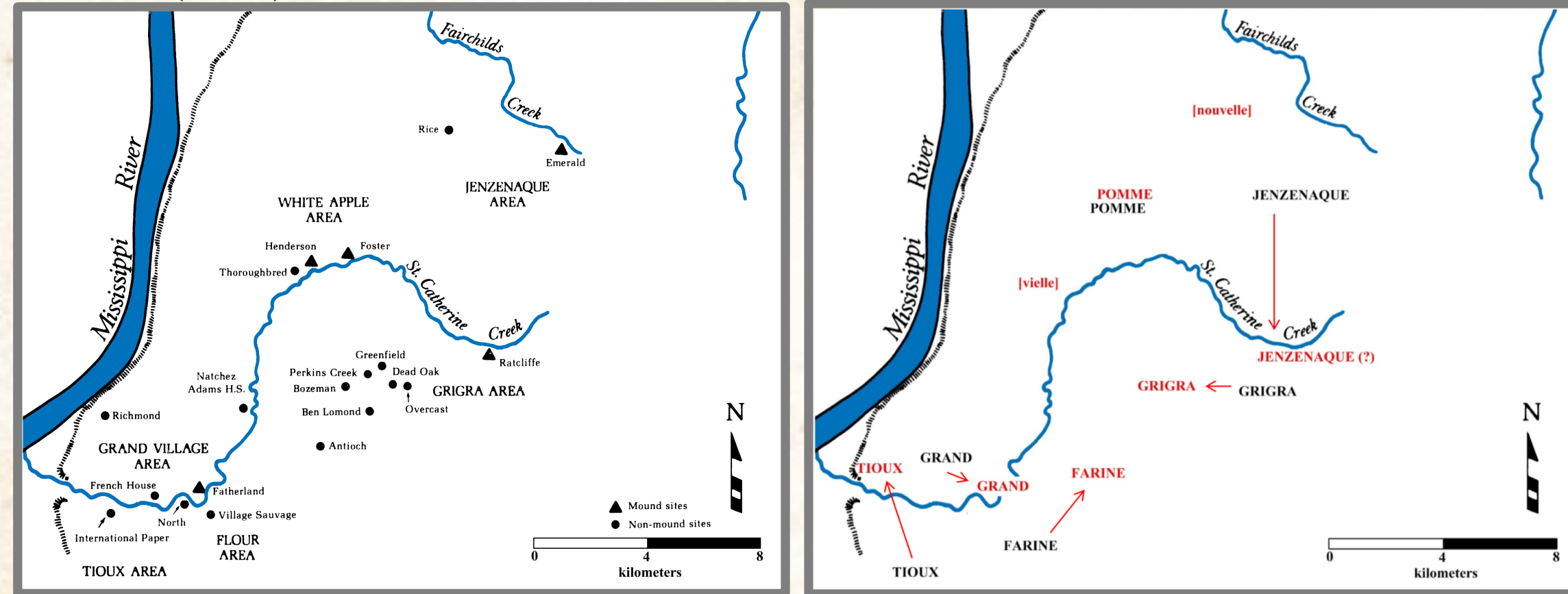
Eighteenth century ethnohistoric documents of the Natchez Indians of the Lower Mississippi Valley (LMV) describe at least six towns: **Grand**, **Farine** (or Canard), **Pomme**, **Tioux**, **Grigra**, and **Jenzenaque**. Ian W. Brown's (1985) reconstruction of the village locations relied on Dumont who wrote his accounts 20 years after his time in Natchez and has been the standard model for over 30 years. In 2018, Steponaitis reevaluated these town areas with the addition of a newly rediscovered Broutin map from 1723 (use the QR code to the right to explore) and two accounts from the 1723 war, shifting our understanding of the social and political landscape of the Natchez district. Here we examine the spatial distribution of known historic and protohistoric sites in the vicinity of modern Natchez, Mississippi, and compare these to the locations of the Native towns as derived from the documents.

Broutin (1723)



Brown (1985)

Steponaitis (2018)



## Archaeological Evidence for the Natchez Villages

### Site clusters

While often described in French documents as “villages,” these units were similar to the Creek towns -- autonomous social units, each with their own chief. These were social and political units, not physical villages, that moved from place to place. Previous understandings of the Natchez towns are based primarily on ethnohistoric evidence (maps, accounts, etc.) from the 1720s. Archaeological interpretations have then been based on these designations from a single point in time. Since the 1980s, many more late prehistoric and early historic sites have been located in the Natchez Bluffs. **The map to the right shows an updated distribution of sites.** Clusters of sites are used to better approximate and confirm the locations of towns. This poster elevates the maps from static locations to an ecologically and archaeologically-situated view of late prehistoric and early historic peoples of the Natchez Bluffs.

### Why include Emerald phase sites?

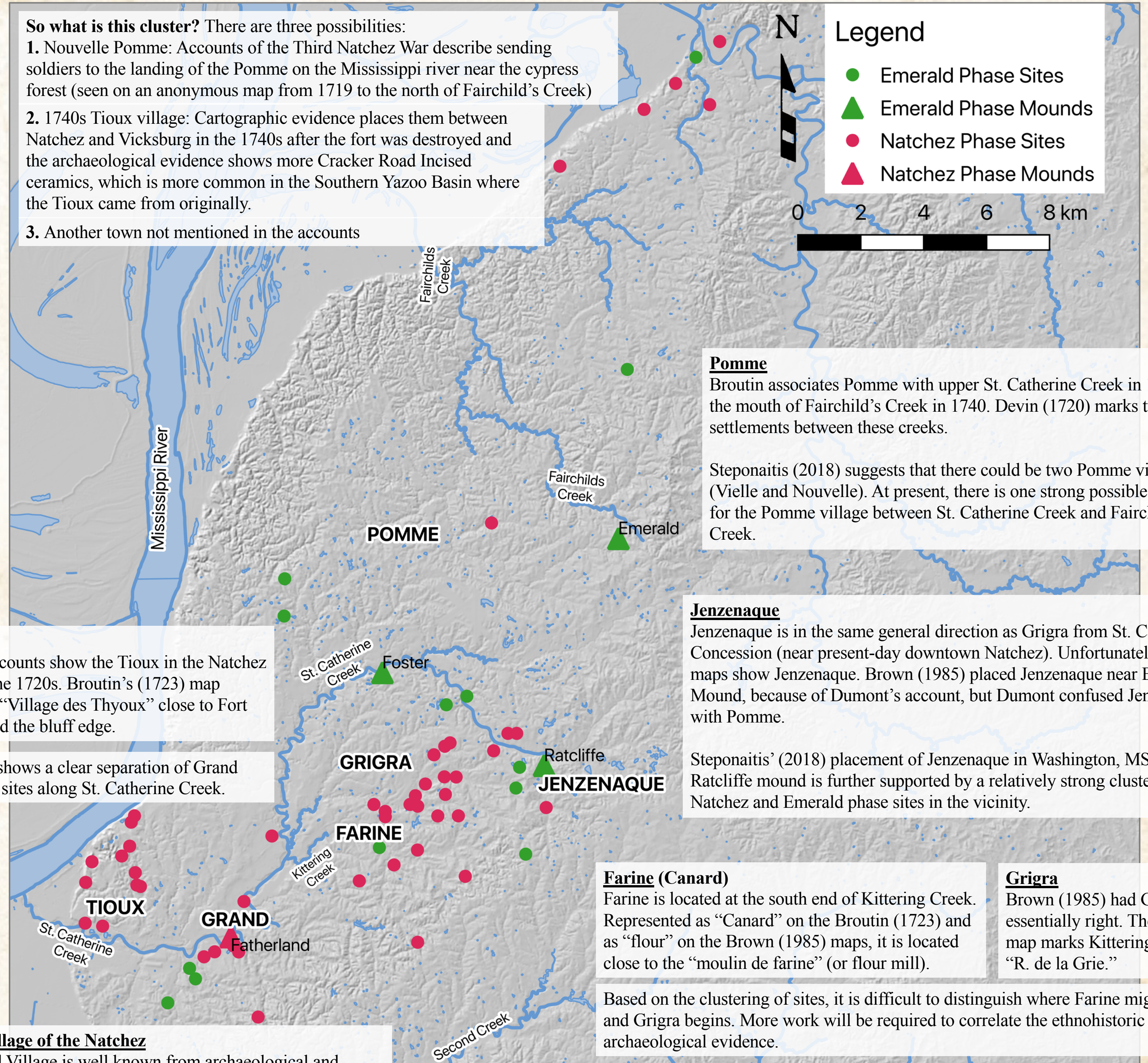
The Natchez phase is defined as an Emerald phase assemblage with European trade goods. Natchez lifeways did not suddenly change with the arrival of Europeans. There are any number of reasons a Natchez phase site would lack trade goods: limited or no direct interaction with Europeans, intentional avoidance of trade goods, relocation just prior to the increase in trade goods, etc. Thus, it is worth further investigation of Emerald phase sites as a part of Natchez towns.

## Future Directions

These data are more than points on a map. Each point represents collections of artifacts. Based on this map:

- Grand, Tioux, Grigra, and Farine contain the most available data. While Grand and Tioux seem to cluster in a way suggestive of town areas, Grigra and Farine need further investigation to untangle them.
- The area labeled Jenzenaque will need further investigation to better understand the temporal scope and how it fits into the ethnohistoric evidence.
- Available evidence for Pomme is scant and will need further survey and detection.
- The northernmost cluster needs direct comparison to Pomme and Tioux sites to determine which narrative is the best fit.

## The Natchez Towns with Emerald and Natchez Phase Sites



**So what is this cluster?** There are three possibilities:  
 1. Nouvelle Pomme: Accounts of the Third Natchez War describe sending soldiers to the landing of the Pomme on the Mississippi river near the cypress forest (seen on an anonymous map from 1719 to the north of Fairchild's Creek)  
 2. 1740s Tioux village: Cartographic evidence places them between Natchez and Vicksburg in the 1740s after the fort was destroyed and the archaeological evidence shows more Cracker Road Incised ceramics, which is more common in the Southern Yazoo Basin where the Tioux came from originally.  
 3. Another town not mentioned in the accounts

**Pomme**  
 Broutin associates Pomme with upper St. Catherine Creek in 1723 and the mouth of Fairchild's Creek in 1740. Devin (1720) marks two settlements between these creeks.

Steponaitis (2018) suggests that there could be two Pomme villages (Vielle and Nouvelle). At present, there is one strong possible location for the Pomme village between St. Catherine Creek and Fairchild's Creek.

### Tioux

Several accounts show the Tioux in the Natchez bluffs in the 1720s. Broutin's (1723) map marks the “Village des Thyoux” close to Fort Rosalie and the bluff edge.

This map shows a clear separation of Grand and Tioux sites along St. Catherine Creek.

### Jenzenaque

Jenzenaque is in the same general direction as Grigra from St. Catherine Concession (near present-day downtown Natchez). Unfortunately, no maps show Jenzenaque. Brown (1985) placed Jenzenaque near Emerald Mound, because of Dumont's account, but Dumont confused Jenzenaque with Pomme.

Steponaitis' (2018) placement of Jenzenaque in Washington, MS near Ratcliffe mound is further supported by a relatively strong cluster of Natchez and Emerald phase sites in the vicinity.

### Farine (Canard)

Farine is located at the south end of Kittering Creek. Represented as “Canard” on the Broutin (1723) and as “flour” on the Brown (1985) maps, it is located close to the “moulin de farine” (or flour mill).

### Grigra

Brown (1985) had Grigra essentially right. The Broutin map marks Kittering Creek as “R. de la Grie.”

Based on the clustering of sites, it is difficult to distinguish where Farine might end and Grigra begins. More work will be required to correlate the ethnohistoric and archaeological evidence.

### Grand Village of the Natchez

The Grand Village is well known from archaeological and ethnohistoric evidence (Neitzel 1963, 1985).

### References

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